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SURVEY OF CITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE USSR

Dr M. Gajewski

In 1939 the USSR urban population amounted to 55.9 million persons or 32.8 percent of the total population. It had increased 213 percent during a 12-year period (1926 - 1 Jan. 1938). Because of recent boundary changes, it rose to 61 million by 1949. The following table shows the increase in the number of cities in the USSR from 1926 to 1947.

Citylike Settlements

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Cities</u> | <u>Workers</u> | <u>Others</u> | <u>Total</u> | <u>Total</u> |
|-------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1926 | 721 | 24 | 121 | 145 | 868 |
| 1936 | 920 | 876 | 558 | 1,434 | 2,354 |
| 1947 | 1,380 | - | - | 1,982 | 3,366 |

According to size of population, the number of cities increased or decreased as follows between 1926 and 1939:

| <u>Cities of</u> | <u>1926</u> | <u>1936</u> | <u>1939</u> |
|---------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| More than 1 million | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| From 500,000 to 1 million | 1 | 2 | 8 |
| From 300,000 to 500,000 | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| From 200,000 to 300,000 | 4 | 14 | 0 |
| From 100,000 to 200,000 | 21 | 40 | 423 |
| From 40,000 to 100,000 | 71 | 90 | 112 |
| Below 40,000 | <u>617</u> | <u>608</u> | <u>727</u> |
| Total | 721 | 767 | 920 [sic] |

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Reconstruction of housing after World War I started in 1923; 30 million square meters of living space were built by 1930. By 1929, the socialized construction enterprises had built 11.2 million square meters of housing space, and individual owners 12.3 million square meters. During the First Five-Year Plan, state enterprises alone built 23.5 million square meters of living space, and during the Second Five-Year Plan 28.6 million square meters. During the Third Five-Year Plan, the socialized sector constructed 35 million square meters of living space and individual owners 10 million square meters. The Fourth Five-Year Plan provided for the construction of state-owned houses amounting to 72.4 million square meters of living space and of individually owned houses totaling 12 million square meters of housing space. During the first 4 years of the Fourth Five-Year Plan, 2.3 million houses were completed in the rural area, and 72 million square meters of living space were made available in the cities and citylike settlements.

The following table shows the amounts of capital investments which were appropriated for housing construction during the five-year plans (in millions of rubles):

| Period | Housing Construction | Repair of Housing | Total | Proportion of Capital Investment in Housing Construction to Total Investments in USSR (in percent) |
|--------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------|--|
| 1923 - 1928 | 1,686 | 216 | 1,902 | 8.9 |
| 1st Five-Year Plan | 4,071 | 569 | 4,640 | 9.9 |
| 2d Five-Year Plan | 10,825 | 1,750 | 12,575 | 10.0 |
| 3d Five-Year Plan | 15,600 | | | 10.5 |
| 4th Five-Year Plan | 42,300 | 5,000 | 47,300 | 14.5 |

In 1939, Moscow and Leningrad houses were equipped with essential utilities as follows (in percent):

| | Moscow | Leningrad |
|---------------------------------|--------|-----------|
| Water supply | 83.4 | 85.4 |
| Sewage system | 77.7 | 84.5 |
| Central heating | 40.5 | 9.2 |
| Including long distance heating | 7.9 | 20.7 |
| Electricity | 99.5 | 96.9 |
| Bathtubs | 16.6 | 19.9 |
| Elevators | 8.2 | 5.1 |

The following table shows the height of the dwelling houses, the main construction materials used, and the essential utilities available in the Soviet cities, excluding Moscow and Leningrad (in percent):

| | Cities With Populations of | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| | All USSR | Up to 100,000 | 100,000 to 200,000 | Over 200,000 |
| Height of Dwellings | | | | |
| Up to 2d floor | 63.0 | 86.0 | 85.0 | 64.6 |
| 3 or more floors | 37.0 | 14.0 | 15.0 | 35.4 |

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| | <u>Cities With Populations of</u> | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| | <u>All USSR</u> | <u>Up to 100,000</u> | <u>100,000 to 200,000</u> | <u>Over 200,000</u> |
| Construction Materials | | | | |
| Stone and brick | 59.7 | 50.6 | 51.1 | 66.6 |
| Wood | 28.9 | 34.2 | 33.4 | 22.5 |
| Others | 11.4 | 15.2 | 15.3 | 10.7 |
| Utilities | | | | |
| Water supply | 58.3 | 40.0 | 44.8 | 63.1 |
| Sewage system | 48.8 | 21.4 | 22.0 | 55.3 |
| Central heating | 20.1 | 13.1 | 13.0 | 21.1 |
| Electricity | 94.0 | 92.3 | 93.6 | 96.6 |

The following table shows the extent to which the water supply, sewage, and streetcar systems of Soviet cities expanded from 1917 to 1941:

| <u>Year</u> | <u>No of Cities</u> | <u>Index</u> | <u>Length (km)</u> | <u>Index</u> | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|--------|-----|
| <u>Water Supply Systems</u> | | | | | | |
| 1917 | 215 | 100 | 5,102 | 100 | | |
| 1928 | 290 | 135 | 7,744 | 146 | | |
| 1932 | 337 | 157 | 9,892 | 194 | | |
| 1937 | 387 | 180 | 13,385 | 263 | | |
| 1941 | 492 | 228 | 16,751 | 326 | | |
| <u>Sewage Systems</u> | | | | | | |
| 1917 | 23 | 100 | 1,708 | 100 | | |
| 1928 | 42 | 182 | 2,541 | 148 | | |
| 1932 | 63 | 274 | 3,421 | 200 | | |
| 1937 | 101 | 440 | 4,726 | 277 | | |
| 1941 | 160 | 695 | 6,226 | 366 | | |
| <u>Streetcar Systems</u> | | | | | | |
| 1917 | 34 | 100 | 1,570 | 100 | 4,127 | 100 |
| 1929 [sic] | 41 | 121 | 2,193 | 140 | 5,388 | 124 |
| 1932 | 51 | 150 | 2,956 | 188 | 8,054 | 194 |
| 1937 | 74 | 217 | 3,926 | 250 | 10,189 | 247 |
| 1941 | 78 | 230 | 4,334 | 276 | 10,995 | 268 |

While the Fourth Five-Year Plan provided for the installation of streetcar services in eight cities and trolley-bus services in 20 cities, 27 cities have already received such transportation during the first 4 years of that period. Trolley-bus services had been running in five cities in 1938 and in eight cities in 1941, while in 1939 a total of 717 trolley buses were operating. This figure is to increase by 3,000. In addition, bus services had been running in 86 cities, with a total of 1,222 buses by the end of the Fourth Five-Year Plan. This number of buses increased by 27,000 during the Third Five-Year Plan period and was to be raised by 22,000 during the Fourth Five-Year Plan. During the latter period, the number of taxis was to be increased by 15,000, and subways have been under construction in Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev.

To improve living conditions, the number of mechanized laundries was increased from 77 in 1943 to 153 in 1938 and 222 in 1941 and the public baths from 1,100 in 1938 to 1,421 in 1941.

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Moscow received 9 million square meters of new living space during all the five-year plans, and 400,000 persons moved into new living quarters after World War II. The length of hard-surfaced streets increased 26 times over 1939, and the Fourth Five-Year Plan provided for an additional 65 kilometers of surfaced streets and the reconstruction of 27 bridges. Moreover, garbage removal was to be completely mechanized.

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